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ABSTRACT

This paper, in presenting a view of curriculum as praxis, contends that empowerment is neither allowed nor given. Rather, it emerges as curriculum practitioners engage in a process which consciously seeks to be empowering. The view of curriculum as praxis develops from reflections of curriculum studies taught in higher education programs, and from a review of the nature of curriculum studies and its place in higher education programs at Queensland University of Technology. Implications for teaching curriculum studies within the view of curriculum as praxis are presented as a number of principles which guided the teaching of a curriculum unit in an inservice teacher education program. The guiding principles are used as a basis for telling the stories of teaching this unit from the perspectives of both the teacher educator and the inservice teachers. The paper concludes by reflecting on the experience as a possible example of empowerment through praxis and by an attempt to define empowerment in the context of teaching the unit. Appendixes provide a summary of the curriculum review; an extract from the course outline; copies of teachers' stories; and a letter seeking approval and inviting participation. (Contains approximately 35 references.) (Author/LL)

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Teaching Curriculum Studies in Teacher Education Programs: Empowerment through Praxis

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ABSTRACT

This paper, in presenting a view of curriculum as praxis, contends that empowerment is not something which is allowed or given. Rather, it is something that emerges as curriculum practitioners engage in a process which consciously seeks to be empowering.

The view of curriculum as praxis develops from the presenter's own reflections of curriculum studies and the teaching of it in higher education programs as well as from a review (undertaken by the School of Curriculum and Professional Studies) of the nature of curriculum studies and its place in higher education programs at Queensland University of Technology.

A number of implications are drawn for teaching curriculum studies within this view of curriculum as praxis. These are presented as a number of guiding principles which led the teaching of a curriculum unit in an inservice teacher education program in First Semester, 1994.

The guiding principles are used in this paper as a basis for telling the stories of teaching this unit from the perspectives of both the lecturer and the teachers taking the unit.

The paper concludes by reflecting on the experience as a possible example of empowerment through praxis and by an attempt to define empowerment in the context of the presenter's experience of teaching the unit.

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Diane Best, Kathryn Boytar, Merry Bundeson, Glenis Cash, Teresa Corfield, Dan Emerson, Melissa Fleming, Dese Goon-Chew, Glenyss Gardner, Anthony Gomes, Gail Horne, Claire Hurwood, Kathy Margolis, Christine Newman, Elvia Paludetto, Sue Purcell, Bill Reinhardt, and Karen Wilson.

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been said that "an emancipatory intent is no guarantee of an emancipatory outcome" (Acker et al, 1983: 431 quoted by Smith: 1993). In the context of this paper praxis is the intent while empowerment is the outcome.

The paper begins with a view of curriculum as praxis and it goes on to contend that empowerment is not something which is allowed or given. Implications are suggested for teaching curriculum studies within this view of curriculum as praxis. They are then focussed as a set of guiding principles for teaching a curriculum studies unit in an inservice degree course in First Semester, 1994.

Reflections on teaching the unit by myself and by the teachers enrolled in the unit are reported. The paper concludes by reflecting on the reflections and posing the question: was there any empowerment through praxis?

2. VIEWS ABOUT CURRICULUM AND TEACHING CURRICULUM STUDIES

A Personal View

I define curriculum in the following way:

> Curriculum is a praxis - a dynamic interplay of theoretical concepts and professional work within a critically reflective mindset. As a praxis, curriculum has no particular starting point - it is a constantly-evolving and living organism made up of an interacting set of ideas, people, space, time and resources. It is the set of learning environments to which learners have access; of learning activities which learners experience; and of learning outcomes which learners achieve, all within the immediate contexts of an individual teacher's (or curriculum practitioner's) and an institution's mission/policy/vision (including its organisational arrangements) as well as the broader contexts of community and society.

A number of curriculum principles are embedded in this definition. The PRAXIS is shaped by CRITICAL REFLECTION and orchestrated by the facilitator of learning, hence the emphasis on TEACHER-CENTREDNESS. Curriculum is directed towards learning, hence the significance of LEARNER-CENTREDNESS. Teachers and learners, taken individually, exhibit a UNIQUENESS which may be traced to their particular VALUES-ORIENTATION. These curriculum principles whose application would suggest that the "shape" of curriculum may vary across learning settings and across learners. Further curriculum principles relate to the need for FLEXIBILITY and INCLUSIVENESS. Any teaching about curriculum which develops from the definition above via an application of these curriculum principles cannot be prescriptive and restrictive; rather it must be EVOCATIVE, SUPPORTIVE and EMPOWERING.

I see four dimensions within this view of curriculum - the context of curriculum, curriculum issues or matters of contestation, conceptions of curriculum and the practice of curriculum. Each of these dimensions constantly interacts with the others and in no sense

is there an imposition of hierarchy among the dimensions. The process of curriculum inquiry may be entered via any one of the dimensions at any time. I would not expect, for example, that the dimensions be taught in a linear fashion. Rather, I would want to facilitate a learning environment where I would work out from the already "known" world of the teacher as Curriculum Practitioner. The starting point may well emerge from a teacher's thinking about some current curriculum practice. An investigation of that practice may well lead into the other dimensions. A teacher, therefore, does not necessarily have to have a well-formed articulated 'position' about the curriculum practice. A concern to reflect on and investigate current curriculum practice is the motivation to apply this view of curriculum as an investigative tool as well as a means of professional empowerment. It's a way for curriculum practitioners to reflect on and theorise about their curriculum practice; to articulate their own curriculum theory and knowledge; and to engage in professional development as an ongoing and integral part of their curriculum practice.

Curriculum, so defined, may have the potential for empowerment - not in the sense of "allowing" teachers to make curriculum decisions, but of giving them the "space" to grow professionally in order to be recognised and valued as they engage in curriculum decision-making in classrooms, schools, systems and the wider community. The following statement provides a broad context for the way in which empowerment is viewed in this paper:

> When teachers are empowered, they will have authorisation to significant influence and participate in decisions related to the educational undertaking in virtually all its dimensions. The power to decide should not be confused with the permission to advise. Allowing teachers to participate in decisions does not equate with empowerment. To have power in its true sense means there is no need for it to be "allowed". When it is allowed, it can also be withdrawn. When one has rightful power, it is not subject to revocation by powerful others. Allowing teachers to make recommendations is akin to the anti-feminist male who argues against the need for his wife to become liberated on the grounds that he currently "allows" her to go out with friends if she chooses. (Romanish, 1991:5)

Thinking about curriculum as a praxis suggests teaching curriculum studies so that we :

> emphasise and use an inside-out perspective of curriculum practice which teachers bring to the study of curriculum in teacher education programs;
>
> value an inside-out perspective of curriculum in teaching curriculum and engaging in curriculum inquiry whereby curriculum theory emerges from a process of theorising about curriculum practice rather than something which is imposed on practice;
>
> accept that each teacher will bring a unique set of beliefs and values relative to curriculum practice;
>
> contextualise these perspectives within a mindset that contests, critically reflects and reconstructs rather than accepts, describes and reproduces;
>
> recognise that curriculum is a living organism; tha it is something which teachers as curriculum practitioners do (very often in collaboration with others), critically reflect upon and constantly reconstruct - it is a praxis;
>
> structure programs so that teachers build their own curriculum knowledge and expertise as they theorise

about their curriculum practice using the four dimensions which incorporates relevant concepts and processes from the field of curriculum inquiry;

create learning environments which facilitate the meaningful professional development and empowerment of teachers as curriculum practitioners; and

negotiate pathways so that the uniqueness of each teacher as a curriculum practitioner is both emphasised and catered for.

(Appendix A includes a list of references which provided background to my conceptualisation of curriculum as praxis with its underlying principles and accompanying dimensions.)

A School View

The curriculum review (see Appendix B for a summary) developed similar views about curriculum and the teaching of curriculum studies. In particular, the following principles to guide the teaching of curriculum studies were identified:

Each unit of curriculum studies should deal with a specific aspect of curriculum and, although concepts should build on earlier studies, repetition should be minimised.

Teaching processes must cater for a diversity of student experience and professional needs in nay one group.

Learning about curriculum should be promoted as a personal process of self-understanding supplemented by input form the literature, as well as input related to the experiences of other professionals.

Learning should be grounded in practical situations which are reflected upon and analysed by reference to a range of perspectives from the literature.

Students of curriculum must see how their studies apply to their own practical contexts and how they can understand and improve their own practice through their studies.

Knowledge should be treated as tentative and open to critique. The literature should be used to gain new perspectives to understand and challenge existing practices. The relationship between theory and practice should be seen as dynamic and reflexive.

Specific approaches which may be used include action research, other research-based methods, case studies and narrative inquiry.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING A CURRICULUM STUDIES UNIT IN AN INSERVICE DEGREE COURSE

Within the views outlined above and within the unit outline itself (an extract from the unit outline is found in Appendix C.), there is that sense of emancipatory intent. Where does that lead in terms of actually teaching curriculum studies? Implications drawn from the two views focus on making connections between my known world of curriculum inquiry and the known world of teachers who take the B.Ed. (Inservice) curriculum unit. For my teaching of the unit, I needed to be concerned specifically about the learning environment

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I was going to create as a means of facilitating professional growth and empowerment through praxis. I wanted the experience in the unit to be an integral and meaningful part of the teachers' professional lives - not just another unit which has to be passed on the road to a degree.

Thus, a learning environment evolved - one which sought to engender empowerment through praxis. The empowerment which I had in mind reflected Romanish's view. It evolved with the conscious use of such guiding principles as negotiation, meaningful and relevant engagement, critical reflection and theorising, and action orientation.

The next section of the paper tells the stories of what happened in this unit in First Semester, 1994 both from my perspective and from the teachers' perspectives.

4. REFLECTIONS ON TEACHING THIS CURRICULUM STUDIES UNIT

My Story

I approached the unit as an example of negotiated curriculum. Obviously, there were some non-negotiable parameters. (The unit is compulsory and I had only one of several groups. The broad content to be addressed as well as the assignment and assessment details needed to be comparable across all groups. The university's expectation that there would be the equivalent of fourteen three-hour class sessions was yet another non-negotiable parameter.) Within these parameters, the unit was negotiated in terms of what we should address, when we would address it, and how we would address it. Negotiation did not occur until teachers were introduced to the unit and had the opportunity to think about where they were coming from and what they wanted from the unit. They were also given the opportunity to hear where I was coming from in terms of my views about curriculum and how it should be taught. It was made clear, however, that the negotiation would occur openly and without a sense that everything had already been decided anyway! The negotiation occurred in the second and third class sessions, and it really became part of the overall discussion relating to the teachers' professional work in its various levels of context - local, systemic and national. Teachers identified the following as expected outcomes of the unit and so the collective production of their own curriculum knowledge had begun:

to feel passionate and empowered (have the ability) to engage in curriculum making (4)

to understand the whole business of curriculum (7)

to understand changes

to look at theory (praxis) (4)

to consider curriculum issues like relevance (3)

to develop a curriculum designed for a special group (2)

to relate current issues to my practice (2)

to consider where I stand re curriculum

to be able to make informed curriculum decisions

to look at elements of curriculum that influence student performance

to understand how curriculum relates to working with kids in classrooms.
(Extract from class handout)

In the early weeks of the semester, there was some bewilderment about what I was trying to do. Some teachers asked me with some degree of frustration for a straightforward definition of curriculum. I resisted by saying that this was our task as the semester unfolded and I suggested, instead, a process whereby we could develop a view of curriculum. The process contained the following elements:

Coming to some sort of working definition of curriculum;

Identifying an area of interest/concern in the teacher's curriculum territory;

Developing a sense of advocacy for that area of interest/concern;

Documenting the process as a means of articulating professional knowledge about curriculum ad the role of the curriculum practitioner.

(The documenting was to occur in the two assignments for the unit.)
(Extract from class handout)

The first few weeks were hard work! Besides the group negotiation, there was negotiation on an individual basis so that each teacher began critically reflecting and theorising - engaging in the process of praxis with reference to his/her own curriculum practice. Class discussions provided the background in terms of relevant concepts and the development of a framework for critical reflection (largely based on matters of social justice and viewing curriculum decisions and provisions from the perspective of the least advantaged). While this background was set within the views of curriculum and teaching curriculum studies as already outlined, there was not a sequential treatment of the principles and dimensions in class sessions. Rather, we used these as building blocks to develop a critical lens to contest and extend our existing professional knowledge about curriculum. Teachers' tentative attempts to reflect on and theorise about their own curriculum practice were documented in the first assignment in which they began to identify issues in their own curriculum practice that were worth further consideration and action. Here were the beginnings of relevant and meaningful engagement by teachers.

From early reading, thinking and discussion, teachers identified the following themes as worth their further consideration:

Curriculum is very much a value-laden activity.

Curriculum has to do with learning.

Curriculum can be seen as something which is intended, experienced and associated with outcomes.

Teachers as curriculum practitioners are central in defining, debating, making decisions about and

understanding curriculum. (The participation of others in the process is not denied.)

Empowerment, accountability and credibility are important concepts related to curriculum and to the teacher's role as a curriculum practitioner.

Teachers are curriculum makers.
(Extract from class handout)

Later, when sharing their work on the first assignment, the teachers, as a group came to the view that:

Curriculum is about learning. It involves:

CONTEXT(S)	Appreciating diversities
	Understanding the impact/implications of broader policies and sectors
	Identifying issues (matters for contestation)
VALUES	Having a position
	Understanding your own values
	Arguing a case
	Recognising the politics of curriculum
	Challenging perceptions/assumptions
	Reaching a shared understanding of what is valued/should be included/who should be involved in the curriculum and curriculum processes
PARTICIPATION	Understanding curriculum decision-making structures and processes
	Supporting participation (through professional development, etc)
OUTCOMES	Empowering for lifelong learning
	Answering "what is good?" (and defining what "good" means - critical frameworks)
	Continuing to reflect, review and reconstruct.

(Extract from class handout)

At this time, I used the expected outcomes which had been identified earlier in the semester as a checklist in order to obtain ongoing feedback from teachers. Their feedback is summarised as follows:

Mostly, the feedback suggested that the shared expectations were being attained. There was a real sense of being on the move. There were some areas which required further attention. For example, "to develop a curriculum designed for a special group". "to relate current issues to my practice", "to look at elements of curriculum that influence student performance' and "to understand how curriculum relates to working with kids in classrooms".
(Extract from class handout)

Class sessions in the second half of the semester and work related to the second assignment included an emphasis on these expectations. In this part of the semester, the unit focussed heavily on the teacher's role as a curriculum practitioner and curriculum change agent. Teachers expanded on their initial theorising and became much more action-oriented. At the same time, there was a growing sense of direction, purpose and confidence in what they were doing.

Throughout the semester, teachers (through reading, activities, discussions and written documentation) engaged in the processes of critically reflecting and theorising - they were engaged in that dynamic interplay of theoretical concepts and professional work (praxis). This critical reflection and theorising were not recorded in a reflective journal *per se*, and many of the records kept in the early part of the semester remained as a personal record for use as an individual resource.

At the end of the semester, teachers were asked to write a brief story of their experience in taking this unit. The outline for the story is contained in Appendix D. Copies of the stories are contained in Appendix E.

The seats are empty and the silence settles - where have all my teachers gone? Have they grown professionally? Has my praxis approach worked? Are they empowered? Has the emancipatory intent - the potential for empowerment - resulted in an emancipatory outcome? What action and further growth will take place? As I ponder these questions, I sense a degree of satisfaction with my efforts to make the connections between my world and theirs through negotiation; with the several unexpected snippets of positive feedback along the way as teachers began to appreciate the opportunity for relative and meaningful engagement in curriculum as praxis; with the general change of mood from frustration, confusion and even anger to purpose, direction and confidence through critical reflection and theorising; and with the written documentation which conveys the feeling that these teachers can and are going to make a difference through action-orientation and empowerment.

But that's my perspective. Let's turn now to what the teachers thought.

The Teachers' Stories

At the beginning of the semester, I explained to the teachers that I was wanting to formalise my reflections on teaching the unit with the view to preparing and presenting a paper at a national conference. I sought their approval to do this and I invited their participation (see Appendix F). All teachers agreed to participate.

In the last class session, teachers completed a very short story of their experiences in the unit. When they finished writing their stories, they spent time reflecting on their stories individually. The teachers were advised that the stories and the reflections would remain anonymous. The reflections focussed on what the teachers now value about curriculum from having completed the unit; what professional growth occurred in the unit; and what was most significant about the way in which the unit was taught. A summary of teachers' reflections appears below. I shall let their comments speak for themselves. (It is

important to note that the teachers were asked simply to complete the story and the reflections - there was no discussion beforehand. Any words, phrases that appear in their stories and reflections, therefore, came from internalising the discourse of the unit over the semester.)

The reflections which follow may be read in conjunction with the stories contained in Appendix E. The reflections and the stories are numbered for comparative purposes.

WHAT I NOW VALUE ABOUT CURRICULUM	WHAT PROFESSIONAL GROWTH HAS OCCURRED	WHAT WAS MOST SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THE WAY THE UNIT WAS TAUGHT
1. Curriculum development is a collaborative and participative process and is a critical aspect of teacher professional status.	Developed a more confident approach to curriculum issues and am able to feel more empowered and knowledgeable for advocacy in SBCD	Good - strategies and methods were effective. Good interaction and discussion were highlights of the course.
2. That "I" can make a difference.	At work, I have become more vocal in discussion of curriculum and curriculum-related matters (CONFIDENCE)	Sharing of different views
3. The positive role of other staff, students (and me) in curriculum development and improvement.	Improved ability to reflect on my curriculum decisions and make appropriate changes.	Small group discussions as part of the course were very effective, and less pressure on students because of this consultation and negotiation process
4. In terms of curriculum development I now value the contribution of others in the curriculum and decision-making process.	During this unit my professional growth has entailed learning more about the forming of policies in my own school/education setting.	The flexibility and negotiation aspects of the unit have enabled me to focus on areas of particular interest (this was of particular benefit.
5. To be an advocate, teachers need to feel strongly about the curriculum.	My method of viewing curriculum - I have learnt to continue on with being a curriculum change agent - curriculum is a continual process.	The unit wasn't taught - students were prompted and class discussions developed.
6. I value my feeling of empowerment and didn't realise how much of an advocate I already was for my curriculum areas. I enjoy knowing that my feeling of empowerment is informed.	I feel that my knowledge base has increased and that communicating with others in the group has put my attitudes towards education into a new perspective. I feel that I am now an informed advocate for my curriculum area.	I feel that the CUB 410 course developed and grew progressively - with my understanding developing also. I enjoyed the reflection points and talking sessions with the others. I appreciated the approach - casual yet professional.
7. I now value my role in curriculum as more than someone who dispenses it to the masses, but rather someone who has a say in what goes on and should use that say.	I have found that I am more interested in all parts of the curriculum than just subject matter. I can also see that I can get more involved in education rather than teaching a subject.	This subject was to me more of an exposure to the ideas related to curriculum than being taught. I found it to be very interesting and enlightening. The whole thing came together very well.

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8. I value its complexities, but also the fact that it can be changed. Change can occur on a small or large scale and be specific to your school/area.	I have been able to determine my values and beliefs about curriculum and have therefore been able to understand the need for change. I feel empowered to be involved in change.	I think the balance between theory and practical discussions has been to the benefit of the course.
9. Curriculum can be changed, and we are the people who can start the process.	Knowledge gained on what curriculum involves.	The amount of discussion which occurred was good.
10. Curriculum occurs where teaching/learning is happening and this is why change is up to educators.	Understanding of the process and in turn empowerment to do something constructive.	Really enjoyed it. Gained heaps from others. Learnt heaps from the lectures. Actually looked forward to lectures and have gained insight into curriculum.
11. I now value the power that teachers have to become change agents.	I feel confident after much reflection to theorise and advocate for what I believe in.	The sharing of personal experiences and discussions were invaluable
12. The teacher's role in making decisions which need to take into account influences from many areas.	Looking at early childhood curriculum as part of the overall education system.	I liked the mix of theory and discussion of actual situations. The smaller group size was good.
13. That I am not bound to teaching a curriculum program which I do not believe is suitable to children/students.	It has helped to develop a critical approach and reflective stance with regard to curriculum and has encouraged my involvement in action research.	I feel it has been taught very effectively with being provided with content as well as having opportunity for input from the group.
14. Collaboration with peers and self-reflection can be used as professional development.	I feel more confident about giving my opinion. It may help others and I hope it will be valued.	Support, encouragement and systematic step by step approach.
15. I now value my ability to input to my curriculum.	I feel I am now much more critically reflective. I feel I am now better able to analyse.	I feel the unit was well taught - I'd actually like to adopt some of the principles in my teaching.
16. That all input is valid including my advocacy.	Reflective analysis in curriculum development.	Discussion is valued and learning from others' experience.

5. REFLECTING ON THE REFLECTIONS: WAS THERE ANY EMPOWERMENT THROUGH PRAXIS?

As mentioned earlier, I sought to provide a learning environment based on the conscious use of the afore-mentioned principles. The use of these principles valued the notion of praxis through critical reflection, theorising, and action. My story indicated a sense of satisfaction that the principles worked. The teachers' reflections on their stories indicated that a body of professional knowledge about curriculum had been developed; that professional growth had occurred; and that there was appreciation for the approach which I had taken in teaching the unit.

But was there and emancipatory outcome - empowerment through praxis? The teachers' reflections as outlined above as well as their individual stories as sampled in Appendix E would appear to indicate that empowerment was taking place as the semester proceeded. There did seem to be that growing appreciation of empowerment in Romanish's terms, and this growth seemed to have something to do with the learning environment which I had created.

But it would be presumptuous to conclude this paper on that almost self-congratulatory note. Let me leave you, instead, with the following ideas. Please use these ideas as a lens to draw your own conclusions.

Smith (1993) identified three forms of empowerment - empowerment as self-growth, as political consciousness-raising; and as collective action/struggle. I believe that all three forms of empowerment were evident in this unit and they were striven for via critical and collaborative forms of curriculum inquiry. For example narrative forms allowed for self-growth; critical analysis contributed to political consciousness-raising; and Action Research was used as a framework for collective action/struggle.

For each form of empowerment, Smith (1993) developed a set of indicators, and it is these indicators which provide a lens for us to reflect further on my story and those of the teachers.

> The main indicators of empowerment as self-growth are:
>
> - changes in self knowledge
> - increases in self-esteem
> - strengthening of personal confidence
> - growing sense of determination and assertiveness
> - the acquisition of specific social/work skills
>
> (Smith, 1993: 79)
>
> The main indicators of empowerment as political consciousness-raising are:
>
> - developing scepticism about appearances
> - questioning assumptions of neutrality and equality in educational provisions
> - recognising the 'raced', classed and gendered nature of curriculum and schooling
> - recognising historical and political antecedents to contemporary practices
>
> (Smith, 1993: 80)

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The main indicators of empowerment as collective action/struggle are:

- authentic participation of the researched in the research; i.e. the dissolution of the conventional distinction between the researcher and the researched and the incorporation of genuine sharing of perceptions and self-reflections of all participants who have an interest in the outcomes of the research
- the development of a shared ideology critique which is integral to subjecting individual and shared understandings to critical review
-a reconstructed and shared theory which forms the basis of a critique of the interests served by contemporary understandings, practices and institutional arrangements
- planning of activities or programs designed to challenge, resist or transform those conditions which are creating the false consciousness, or the alienation, or the oppression of particular groups
- collective strategic action.

(Smith, 1993: 81-82)

When the teachers finished writing their stories and reflecting upon them individually, I shared with them Smith's three forms of empowerment and their accompanying indicators. Their response as a group was heartening - there was an obvious identification with the indicators particularly in terms of self-growth and political consciousness raising. I am left to ponder whether the indicators for collective action/struggle will be present in these teacher's professional lives as curriculum practitioners in the months ahead.

For me, the indications are that the views of curriculum and of teaching curriculum studies outlined in this paper have currency; that the principles derived to create an empowering learning environment are worth further development and implementation; and that teachers don't have to be just implementers of curriculum, but empowered makers of it.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF REFERENCES PROVIDING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MY OWN VIEW OF CURRICULUM AND OF TEACHING CURRICULUM STUDIES

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APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM REVIEW

UNDERTAKEN WITHIN

THE SCHOOL OF CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

AT QUT IN 1993

RATIONALE **Curriculum studies is important because it provides an integrative framework for theorising about professional practice.**	**KNOWLEDGE BASE** **Curriculum studies focuses on a knowledge base which empowers educators through the development of**	**understandings and capacities which are contextualised in both professional practice and broader societal trends and issues.**	**TEACHING CURRICULUM** **The teaching of curriculum studies values the centrality of educators in theorising about decisions in the context of practice.**	**STRUCTURING CURRICULUM** **Curriculum studies provides a structure for developing professional practice in terms of three themes and three phases.**
Curriculum studies should have a central place in all teacher development programs because curriculum: (1)is the responsibility of all educators, irrespective of their position (2)integrates teachers' understandings in the context of practice and is at the heart of teachers' work (3)involves understandings and skills which facilitate teachers' implementation of policy and its evaluation in context (4)provides educators with a framework for accountability. (5)provides a framework to facilitate teachers' understanding of the changing nature of professional practice and their interpretation of the maze of issues which surround it (6)is a means by which educators can examine and clarify their beliefs and values which underpin their practice.	*Understandings:* •an understanding of the self and one's role as a curriculum decision maker •an understanding of the contexts in which curriculum decision making occurs •an understanding of contemporary educational policy developments and issues at national, state and local levels; •an understanding of different philosophical orientations to curriculum and their implications; •an understanding of theoretical perspectives on the process of curriculum development, •an understanding of factors contributing to successful curriculum change; •an understanding of personal, social, and organisational skills which facilitate curriculum change •an understanding of the value-laden nature of the educator's role in curriculum decision making.	*Capacities:* •a capacity to theorise about curriculum practice; •a capacity to analyse critically educational policy; •a capacity to interpret broad educational policy in terms of the problems and priorities of particular educational settings, and to develop appropriate curriculum responses; •a capacity to challenge and critique theoretical perspectives on the process of curriculum development in the light of practice; •a capacity to develop, implement and evaluate a range of approaches and strategies to bring about curriculum change; •a capacity to articulate and justify a curriculum position which reflects the beliefs and values underpinning the educator's role as curriculum decision maker;	•Each unit of curriculum studies should deal with a specific aspect of curriculum and, although concepts should build on earlier studies, repetition should be minimised. •Teaching processes must cater for a diversity of student experience and professional needs in any one group. •Learning about curriculum should be promoted as a personal process of self-understanding supplemented by input from the literature, as well as input related to the experiences of other professionals. •Learning should be grounded in practical situations which are reflected upon and analysed by reference to a range of perspectives from the literature. Students of curriculum must see how their studies apply to their own practical contexts and how they can understand and improve their own practice through their studies. •Knowledge should be treated as tentative and open to critique. The literature should be used to gain new perspectives to understand and challenge existing practices. The relationship between theory and practice should be seen as dynamic and reflexive. •Specific approaches which may be used include action research, other research-based methods, case studies and narrative inquiry.	A structure can be provided by reference to three themes set within three phases of career development. *Theme one* (Self understanding with an individual perspective) is appropriate as one of the foci of the pre-practice phase because it is at this point that students bring with them a set of assumptions which can be tested in terms of curriculum research. This provides the platform for the reconstruction of students' curriculum thinking. *Theme two* (Self understanding with a professional team perspective) guides the study of curriculum into areas of education that emerge from common issues that need to be addressed by educators in the early phases of their career. Educators working in similar contexts (as well as those across a range of contexts) engage in the complex process of curriculum decision making and hence confront similar problems. *Theme three* (Self understanding with a transformative perspective) acknowledges that once an educator has become a well established member of the profession, he or she as a "knowing subject" develops more complex understandings in terms of professional life. As such, the study of curriculum in the phase of later practice encourages the educator to engage in a process of critique at the systems and structural levels as well as the local level.

The review undertaken by the School was convened by Bob Elliott. Other members of the School who participated were Tania Aspland, Sue Johnston, Ian Macpherson, Christine Proudford and Howard Thomas.

APPENDIX C

EXTRACT FROM UNIT OUTLINE FOR

CUB410 TEACHERS AND THE CURRICULUM

1. RATIONALE

The area of curriculum development is a vital concern for practising teachers seeking an extension of their basic knowledge and skills. The teachers enrolled in the Fourth Year of the Bachelor of Education have all completed a course of basic teacher education and have had at least one year of professional practice. Study of curriculum development enables experienced teachers to reflect critically upon the underlying rationale of their professional activity. This critical reflection takes place within the context of contemporary curriculum theory as implemented in their local school settings. It also includes a study of the relationship between such curricula and proposed curriculum models. At the same time emphasis is placed on undertaking an analytical re-examination of the relevance of such models to meeting present and future school students' needs.

To be productive, this critical reflection requires informed situational analysis whereby appropriate curriculum decisions can be made. Such decisions must be based on a realistic appraisal of school climate, school organisation and structures which link school curricula with their local contexts, the school system or sub-system and society at large. Such an appraisal links the focus and approach of this subject with that found in Contemporary Issues in Education. The acquisition of understandings and insights from this appraisal then provides a starting point for the development of improved school programs. Such development necessitates appropriate expertise in curriculum design, implementation and evaluation.

This core subject dovetails with Contemporary Issues in Education in that it too seeks to examine and bring together aspects of education, schooling and school programs in the broader sense with the perspectives of individual teachers. It does this by asking teachers to question the significance of curriculum in the total school sense and its relation to their roles as individual professional teachers. Such questions concern not only the content of curricula but also the process of curriculum development. The questioning takes place in a way that encourages practising professionals to reinterpret their own experiences in a wider theoretical framework. At the same time it facilitates their development of a school-based curriculum perspective that is realisable within the individual teacher's professional role. Since subject participants serve in diverse professional roles, they also stand to gain much from developing a broad curriculum perspective as a consequence of interacting and sharing with professional colleagues engaged in revising varying curricular aspects of the educational process.

2. OBJECTIVES

Students will develop and apply their understanding of curriculum concepts and their mastery of related skills and strategies to:

(1) the conceptual frameworks for understanding educational practice and curriculum theory;

(2) the analysis of existing curriculum practices in their specific educational settings through the identification of socio-political, ideological, organisational, resource and ethical constraints;

(3) the design of curriculum programs suitable for their educational settings;

(4) the planning of appropriate plans for implementing and evaluating these programs in their specific educational setting.

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3. CONTENT

The following content outline seeks to integrate theory and practice, and all four (4) topics proceed within the context of contemporary curriculum theory and its applicability to the development of school programs.

	Topic	*Explanatory Comments*
1.	*Introduction*	This topic introduces students to the subject by placing the study of curriculum in context (linking with Contemporary Issues in Education); by introducing students to the currently dominant approaches to curriculum theorising; by helping students to use these approaches in context of their own curriculum practices and by presenting an overview of the three major topics in the unit. The notion of curriculum change is emphasised. Therefore, curriculum as process becomes a major focus throughout the subject.
2.	*The Teacher as Curriculum Analyst*	Students consider the established educational context for curriculum change and analyse those factors of the educational situation which impinge upon possible curriculum actions. This topic considers the deficiencies in the traditional blueprint approach to curriculum change within socio-political and ethical contexts which need to be understood if curriculum change is to be successfully initiated.
3.	*The Teacher as Curriculum Designer*	This topic is based on a comparative analysis of the various approaches to curriculum design described in the curriculum literature and developed within the context of situational analysis covered in Topic 2.
4.	*The Teacher as Curriculum Practitioner*	This topic draws upon the literature on curriculum change and on the more specific literature Relating to both curriculum evaluation and school-based curriculum development. Ways of implementing and evaluating curriculum action are considered within the socio-political and ethical contexts' framework noted in Topic 2.

4. ASSESSMENT

The unit has two written assignments, the first setting the scene for a framework of elements to be investigated in the second. Both need to be satisfactorily completed to receive a pass rating for the unit. Credit will also be given for class participation.

APPENDIX D

OUTLINE FOR TELLING THE BRIEF STORY

AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER

CUB 410 TEACHERS AND THE CURRICULUM

(IAN'S GROUP, FIRST SEMESTER, 1994)

REFLECTION POINT # 3

The Story of My Experience in CUB 410

In telling your story, you may wish to focus on the following:

Where you began

What you did along the way

What understandings and skills you developed

How you felt about the approach taken by the lecturer

What position you now value and hold about curriculum generally, your role as a curriculum practitioner, your contribution to the curriculum change process (locally, systemically, nationally), etc

****

APPENDIX E

COPIES OF THE TEACHERS' STORIES

(1) I came to the course expecting to be given specific guidelines regarding curriculum design and development however I was pleasantly surprised at the approach taken by the lecturer. My lack experience in adult training years also provided me with a desire to critical analyse curriculum issues and practices which I did throughout this subject and have developed skills such as critical reflection, active reflection and research.

The approach of this course created a conducive environment for adult learning. I felt that opportunities always existed for self-directed learning and we were able to pursue issues without fear of seeming to feel excluded.

Perhaps one of the most important aspect of this course was it has made me feel empowered to be involved in curricula debates.

(2) I began my studies with, shall I say, very large blinkers on. My state of mind was very negative and my only motivation was money. I might also add that I was nervous, not very confident in myself and frightened of failing.

With the help of others in the class who were feeling as daunted as I, I stumbled through the first assignment and succeeded.

Ian was very patient, informative & persistent in advocating his ideas & promoting the importance of our role in curriculum change.

Somewhere along the way I "saw the error of my ways" and actually became interested in curriculum. I now feel informed & a lot more knowledgable on curriculum &

(2 (contd.)) related matters. My confidence has grown & my fear of failing diminished.

I owe a very big thank-you to both Ian & the members of the group for helping me jump my hurdle.

(3) I began, not knowing anything about curriculum models, theorying etc. but I have had experience writing programs and, once I started reading on CUB410 I could start to relate the what I was reading to what (and how) I was doing.

I believe I am now able to critically analyse, evaluate programs much more efficiently and make what I am doing more relevant to the kids.

Ian was supportive and approached the subject with a great deal of professionalism. Timetabled meetings were an efficient way of discussing the assignments and related issues, and the symposia were efficient and relieved the pressure of a graded semester.

I feel much more empowered (simply through improved understanding).

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(4) My experiences with curriculum (up to the point of beginning CUB410) had been very directed. Curriculum decisions had been made by those in "power" at my school and I had very little input into them. My experiences in this subject has led me to gain the confidence to participate actively in the decision making process. My confidence has stemmed mainly from the knowledge base which has been built up over the last 14 weeks. Although I realised how little I knew about the curriculum process, I didn't realise how much it affected me until I became involved in making these decisions. My participation in the curriculum process has impinged on many other areas of my teaching, and I now feel "empowered" in my own teaching context.

My experience in CUB410 (Curriculum) was very limited. The focus of curriculum was concerned
(5) with what student learn etc. Through attending lectures I became aware to what curriculum actually was. I have actually planned subject areas, written work Program → I was not aware of my input into the curriculum. I thought I was only doing what I had to. This subject has opened my eyes/mind to many other underlying issues such as decision making in the Schooling System.
It is important to be a confident teacher/person within the school community. Thus be an advocate of ...n change. If you feel you have the power and you are making

5 (cont'd) The lecturer was very interested into this topic and thus became infectious to all of the students. The lecturer clarified many issues.

Overall I feel that I am constantly involved in curriculum. The school in which I work at is new + many changes + new strategies + programs are in place. I am involved in these decisions constantly.

(6) In the beginning I didn't really think Curriculum was such a powerful thing. Something I have come to realise through CUB410 is that Curriculum is a way of helping to change things. Teachers are change agents and it is through Curriculum that teachers have this power to change things. The way/approach that teachers have of the curriculum can determine or influence many outcomes. I have found that through my Curr. dev. I can help to change the attitudes of students/fellow staff and the community. It may only be in my class room and with my students that I feel empowered - but that's a start. I can now preach/profess my advocacy for my curriculum areas and feel that I have an informed base on which to ... change needs to occur from. Inform others of this and hope that this will snowball and change will result.

(7) I really didn't understand much about Curriculum except that it was to do with subject matter. I was fascinated by many of the readings and how they made sense in terms of many things I do and I really found that I understood a lot about the other things involved with curriculum not just subject matter. The idea that I could have input into more of the curriculum I didn't really believe but as I thought about it and realised what is possible I could see that there was a lot more I could do

I found it very good to talk and listen to others about what is happening in other classrooms and other schools. It made me think even further about my place in the whole school set-up Ideas such as School Based Curriculum Development and Socially Critical Schools had not occurred to me as such but it is very rewarding to realise that there are lots of common grounds for all teachers

I guess the thing that has excited me the most when looking back is that I feel now that I can influence others into thinking about their place in schools The role of professional development is now something that I have reconsidered and can see there are lots of ways that it could be made valid eg just getting teachers to talk to one another about what they are doing in classrooms

I found the way the subject was treated by the lecturer to be most enlightened. By looking at different aspects but all the time conscious of discussion + reflection it has been a most enjoyable experience

(8) On beginning the subject CUBUIO I was a little unsure of what the course would encompass. The idea of curriculum and my experience with it was frightening I did not feel confident that I had much experience to deal with the ideas which we were to discuss

Along the way, I reflected on my own practice and determined values and beliefs I hold. I enjoyed participating in group sessions and discussions and felt these were of great importance. Talking between other professionals was very educational.

I now understand the complexities of curriculum I am aware of the procedures involved in curriculum change. I feel empowered to be able to change the curriculum, by justifying the reasons for change.

I feel that the time allowed for informal and guided discussion was good. There was a balance between theoretical and practical sessions.

I feel curriculum is a complex process, but not impossible to understand. I feel I will

(9) I began this subject with out a very clear understanding of what curriculum was and what it involved. Throughout the course through class discussion, etc I've developed a better understand. Curriculum is not only the content but also the learning experience, assessment and evaluation, etc. Being a curriculum advocate is essential in changing the existing curriculum so it more adequately meets the needs of the children it is made for. The first step I feel is that I have to become more involved in the curriculum change process at the local level (in the school.).

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(10) In the beginning "curriculum" was quite a scarey term

It took some abstract thinking to get a grasp on it However

through the semester the word became part of my experience. I was able to "understanding the concept of curriculum in everyday (school) life. Along the way there were mixed emotions, ranging from very confused lows to very high highs, only to realise that I wasn't in control & but a low again This showed me how individual "curriculum" is, & that my experience was not necessarily someone else's. I enjoyed the lectures & gained quite a lot of insight from talking to others, to see others were at times as confused / happy etc as I was. Basically along the way I had to continue to think, & was challenged to possibly re-think my stance, through readings & lectures now. I feel empowered to change up I feel is necessary. Also ? feel as though I have succeeded in making a valuable change. I realise the change path may not be smooth, but ! at least am armed with such a knowledge - Nothing is impossible.

(11)

I began this course believing teachers were mainly implementers with very little real power. After reading & researching SOC just issues & inclusive curriculum draft material, I've realized just how much power we, as teachers, do have. I now feel empowered to advocate for what I believe in (not just SOC just) I understand that teachers can be change agents and we can make a difference. I now feel more "professional" in that I can articulate & theorize & am no longer afraid of THEORY! I have really enjoyed these lectures. The sharing of personal experiences & discussions was invaluable I think we empowered each other to stand up for & be vocal about what is important to us. The lecturer was very approachable & helpful The format of the lectures with Ian guiding & reflecting on our discussions provided a great learning experience.

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(12) Starting the semester I was unsure what to expect from the course.

The language used during the first weeks was confusing. The language did not seem to apply to the early childhood field. It was very uncomfortable to feel so confused

Reading and discussing the stages of the curriculum gradually meant I began to understand the meaning of the terms in common use. At about the time we began looking at the way values influence decisions, I felt I was grasping the concepts and was more aware of how they were influencing my teaching. I found the further we went the more interesting the topic became and more of the points were related to form a better overall view.

I feel I have a better understanding of how curriculum works and more confidence in my ability to make decisions.

I was pleased with the way the readings and the discussion worked together in the groups.

(13) I began this subject not knowing / and only experience in curriculum development. It has been an enlightening experience to understand curriculum development. It has caused me to consider in depth the processes involved in developing curriculum programs, and to examine my own situation in this respect.

I during this subject, I was able to experience empowerment. Being enabled to develop curricula, in the role of a change agent in the educational process. This process has equipped me with skills which I will be able to utilize in my teaching practice.

(14)

I began thinking that curriculum was very theoretical, something I steered away from partly because I'm early childhood trained and not used to using a syllabus. I was confused about the terms curriculum and syllabus

Along the way I read, reflected on readings, and my own teaching practice and began to relax in class sessions where the discussion was lively and of benefit to me, to hear how others were coming to grips with various aspects of curriculum.

I now realise that professional development can take many forms, not just formal study, seminars and workshops. By collaborating with colleagues, reflecting on our practice and empowering ourselves with current knowledge we can become curriculum change agents.

The lecturer was very supportive of our efforts, encouraging during discussions and lead us systematically through the course.

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(15) began with my naive notion of what curriculum is. I saw it as a piece of paper document, designed by some higher authority that had to be adhered to. I had nothing to do with curriculum development I just taught from it.

Seeing curriculum as a dynamic document which is influenced by not only me the teacher but society, industry, government policy + funding has been a development in my thinking. The development has been progressive but much by much new insights about curriculum have been gained.

I feel I now have the power (it was always there - but I didn't have it) to alter curriculum, to add or subtract from it, to implement curriculum and most importantly to advocate for curriculum.

At first self reflection was very difficult (I guess I was coming from a powerless base). But now I am empowered to relate my ideas, opinions, values. This I see as a direct result of the time taken to reflect and actually put pen to paper. Often we don't get time to reflect + I feel we would be far better teachers if we took the time to do so.

The word "lecture" is not a good one for you, Jas. I see you as more of a facilitator, A facilitator of learning. I really admire your approach + I feel that there has been much professional development with this reflecting approach. Because we have had to actually reflect, + analyse what + how we teach, I believe that the learning about curriculum will be remembered long after the course is finished.

41

(16) I began this unit with little understanding of curriculum and its implications. Being a new teacher issues of curriculum have not been the most pressing.

As the course has progressed I have realised that my earlier understanding of curriculum (being program & syllabus) was wrong and that 'curriculum' is very much the issue.

I have started to look more into 'why?' - the motivations behind the curriculum. Important factors in decision making for me as a curriculum developer and implementer include an analysis of my values and what I am really trying to do with my teaching.

In a practical sense, out of this course, I have analysed the situation in which curriculum is presented in my setting.

42

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APPENDIX F

LETTER SEEKING APPROVAL AND INVITING PARTICIPATION

School of Curriculum and Professional Studies
1 March 1994.

Dear Participants in my CUB 410 Group, First Semester, 1994,

I am attending the ATEA conference here in Brisbane in July this year, and I am submitting a proposal for a paper presentation. The title is "Teaching Curriculum Studies in Teacher Education Programs: Empowerment through Praxis". An abstract is attached for your perusal.

I would like to use our experience during this semester in writing and presenting this paper. The paper is being based on what I do as a teacher anyway - it is not an add-on. I believe my experience is worth sharing with colleagues at a forum such as the ATEA conference, and I will be very interested in their comments and feedback. I would be most grateful if you would keep on file your notes re the three activities from the first week, the reflection points, and any other notes (however furious, messy, or whatever!) which you may be taking. I'm keeping notes of my impressions of each session. In the very last session, you will be completing reflection point #3 which will really be a short narrative vignette of your experience of the process. It will be easier to write if you have all the earlier bits and pieces on hand for reference. We shall spend time together (again in class) talking from these narratives in an attempt to identify features you found to be empowering and features which militated against your feeling empowered.

I want to stress that this will in NO WAY jeopardise your work and grade in the unit. In a sense, the paper is my assignment! I am probably too old (really too professional!) to be pumped up or deflated by feedback which tells it as it really is. However old or professional I am, feedback is an essential part of my career-long professional growth. I feel we are developing a group ethos where we don't feel threatened, and where we can be open and honest in what we share about curriculum concerns, and it is on this basis that I feel comfortable in floating this idea with you. It is only as people like myself engage in this sort of analysis of our own work that our performance will improve.

Your collaboration with me will not involve extra work. The only extra time involved will be if you accept an invitation to attend the paper session at the conference (and I hope some of you would in order to keep my presentation honest).

In terms .. acknowledgment, I would certainly want to include your names in the paper itself. Any direct quotes or narrative vignettes used would not be identifiable to a particular person. Pseudonyms would be used.

Would you please sign the sheet (to be circulated during the third class session) as an indication of your willingness to take our ongoing reflections of the unit (which we are doing, anyway) the step further into the development of the conference paper.

Sincerely,

Ian Macpherson

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